

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LE BE NL

SUBJ: LEBANESE AFFAIRS KEEP FAHMY IN EGYPT

REF: CAIRO 12161

1. FONMIN FAHMY'S DECISION TO CANCEL HIS TRIP TO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND NEXT WEEK WAS ANNOUNCED TO EGYPTIAN WIRE SERVICE EVENING SEPTEMBER 9 AND IS MENTIONED BRIEFLY IN CAIRO MORNING PAPERS SEPTEMBER 10. ACCORDING TO PRESS, FAHMY FORCED TO POSTPONE EUROPEAN VISIT BECAUSE OF "CONCENTRATED ACTIVITIES" IN COMING DAYS REGARDING LEBANON. AMONG LEADING LEBANESE PERSONALITIES WHOM FAHMY ALLEGEDLY EXPECTS TO CONSULT WITH IN CAIRO ARE JUMBLATT, GEMAYEL AND LEBANESE MUFTI HASAN KHALID. ON SEPTEMBER 9, GUMHURIYYA'S DIPLOMATIC EDITOR HAD WRITTEN, WITH USUAL INDEFATIGABLE EGYPTIAN OPTIMISM, THAT GOE HAS LAUNCHED "IMPORTANT NEW INITIATIVE" BY CONTACTING ALL DISPUTING PARTIES IN LEBANON. SHI'A IMAM SADR AND JUMBLATT "REP" ABBAS KHALAF HAVE ALREADY MET WITH FAHMY, AND OTHER SENIOR LEADERS ARE "EXPECTED" IN CAIRO SOON.

2. COMMENT: ON THIS RAMADAN FRIDAY, WE HAVE PREDICTABLY BEEN UNABLE CONTACT FONMIN'S OFFICE STAFF TO PROBE REAL REASONS FOR CANCELLATION EUROPEAN TRIP. MORNING
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SEPTEMBER 9, EMBOFF HAD DISCUSSED WITH SENOR FAHMY AIDE

EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY VIS-A-VIS LEBANON AND RECEIVED STRONG IMPRESSION THAT FAHMY IS SIMPLY TREADING WATER, PUTTING BEST POSSIBLE FACE ON IMPLICIT GOE ADMISSION THAT SYRIAN IS IN COMMAND OF EVENTS IN LEBANON. AIDE IMPLICITLY ADMITTED THAT NO PROGRESS IS EXPECTED UNTIL SUMMIT NEXT MONTH.

3. DUTCH CHARGE DROPPED BY SEPTEMBER 10 TO LAMENT FAHMY'S "IMPERTINENCE" AND ASKED FOR OUR READING OF CANCELLATION. CHARGE OPINED THAT FAHMY SEEKING GIVE IMPRESSION OF EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY AND CAUTIONED AGAINST UNDER-ESTIMATING GOE ABILITY TO DELUDE ITSELF INTO FANTASY THAT EGYPTIAN DIPLOMACY IS PLAYING KEY ROLE IN BEIRUT AND DAMASCUS. DUTCH CHARGE AGREED WITH THIS SPECULATION WHICH REFLECTED TENTATIVE CONCLUSION HE HAD DRAWN FROM UNCEREMONIOUS POSTPONEMENT.
MATTHEWS

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